



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Northeast Indiana to Pilot New Youth-based Workforce Initiative

New program gives youth a foot in the door of businesses

FT. WAYNE, Ind. (October 11, 2005) – Twenty-two Northeast Indiana high schools are participating in a pilot program aimed at preparing high school students with workforce readiness skills important after graduation. The Indiana Department of Workforce Development's (IDWD) WorkEthic program works in collaboration with area high schools and businesses to provide students a recognized credential system to measure and commend student's workforce readiness skills based on a number of criteria.

IDWD Commissioner Ron Stiver announced the pilot program as part of the first annual Youth Education Summit organized by the Northeast Indiana Workforce Investment Board. "We are constantly seeking ways we can better prepare students for success in higher education and the workplace and the WorkEthic program is one way to do that," said Stiver. "By developing the necessary skills of Hoosier students and reinforcing the positive value of a commitment to successful education and employment, students are better prepared for life beyond high school graduation."

The Northeast Indiana schools participating in the program (which began Oct. 1), include: Adams Central, Belmont, South Adams, New Haven, Woodlan, Heritage, Paul Harding, Leo, Carroll, Homestead, Eastbrook, Madison Grant, Marion, Mississinewa, Oak Hill, Huntington, Jay County, Bluffton, Norwell, Southern Wells, Churubusco, and Columbia City. Eighteen other high schools plan to begin the WorkEthic program in mid-November.

Area high school juniors and seniors are eligible for the program which businesses may adopt as a method for determining eligible hires. Some of the ten criteria established by employers and educators for earning a WorkEthic certification include punctuality and timeliness; discipline; attendance; overall grade point average; participating in community service projects; organizational skills; respectfulness; and teamwork.

Participating students and educators are involved in the program throughout the school year, with the goal of the student achieving a WorkEthic certificate by May. East Allen County School District served as the first WorkEthic certification program during the 2004-05 school year. The WorkEthic program was developed in response to the expressed needs of both the business and education communities.

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development is charged with continually improving the Hoosier workforce by assisting companies to create new jobs and improve employee skills. The agency offers a variety of training and educational grants, partners with the state's 26 WorkOne Centers, administers the unemployment insurance system, provides labor market information, assists employers with preparing workers for layoffs and closures and operates a statewide job placement service. For more information on IDWD, call 888-465-4616 or visit the web site at www.workforce.in.gov.

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